



Our patients are inspiring...

“It’s home from home!”

We are privileged to care for people like Kate and her family, at probably the most difficult time in their lives, but we can only do this with the generosity of our local community.

We have to raise over £20,000 every day in order to provide care, free of charge, to our patients and their relatives.

For further information about how to support Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, contact our Fundraising team on:

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support@pth.org.uk

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Kate's Story

In-Patient Unit, Therapies and Patient & Family Support for MND patients

April 2017

Phyllis Tuckwell[®]
Hospice Care 
...because every day is precious

Kate's Story



It was only weeks after completing the Farnham Pilgrim's half marathon, in September 2013, that Kate, 61, first noticed something wasn't quite right. When pegging out her washing, on a sunny day in October, she felt a funny sensation in her hand. Having always been an active person, however, Kate simply dismissed it as an old sports injury.

Two months later, when on the treadmill at her local gym, Kate realised that she was feeling unusually tired and unfit, but it wasn't until her legs felt heavy whilst she was climbing the stairs one day that she took herself to the doctors. After a referral to a neurologist, Kate was diagnosed with fast-moving MND.

Kate, whose husband died in 2003, was living at home with her son Justin, 33, at the time, although he was working and so could not care for her full-time. Her daughter Lyndsey, 32, came round every day to help Kate, but as she also worked, Kate spent much of her day on her own.

*"The illness progressed so quickly, I ended up living upstairs because I couldn't get around the house anymore" Kate explained. **"I was admitted to the Hospice in March 2014, and they've been absolutely fantastic with everything. If I'd stayed at home, I don't know what I would have done. I'm safe and secure here – at least now no-one has to worry."***

Kate's illness progressed rapidly, and she became increasingly dependent on those around her, something which she found hard to adjust to.

"I've always travelled and been very active, so it took quite a while to get used to asking people to do things for me" she said.

Although she was born in the UK, Kate moved to South Africa when she was 18, after her father's business required him to relocate there. Just over two years later they were transferred again, this time to Beirut, where Kate worked in engineering, *"learnt to speak a little Arabic, some German, brushed up on my French, and had a ball!"* Three years later she moved back to England in 1975, where she secured a job at EMI records in London. It was here that Kate met her South African husband Grenville, who lured her back to South Africa, where they settled down, married and had two children.

"Having to depend so much on people is hard," she admits. "When you first talk about coming to the Hospice, you think that's it, that's the end, and you expect everyone to be solemn and serious. But it's not like that at all - you can actually have such a laugh! Having a bit of banter makes things easier, you don't feel as though your independence has been taken away."

When she first arrived at the Hospice, Kate found relief and relaxation in the neck and back massages, and hand massages, which she was offered through the Dove Centre. She also had occupational therapy and physiotherapy sessions to help her cope with her increasingly restricted movement. Through our Patient and Family Support team (PAFS), Kate had both counselling and spiritual healing sessions, and met with Hospice chaplains. The

PAFS team also helped Kate with patient welfare and social work support and - with the help of funding from the MNDA - facilitated a trip to North Wales by private ambulance in June, enabling her to attend her daughter's wedding there, which was a very special occasion for all.

Since learning of their mum's illness, Kate's son and daughter have both been fundraising for Phyllis Tuckwell. Justin, who took part in The New Forest 10 in July, will be running in both the Farnham and Basingstoke half marathons in the Autumn. And earlier this year Lyndsey raised over £1,000 by taking part in 'Tough Mudder', a military-style obstacle course in which participants are faced with 25 challenges over 12 miles. *"Her t-shirt was white when she started," Kate commented, "and at the end it was completely brown – covered in mud!"*



When asked how she felt about Phyllis Tuckwell, Kate smiled. **"The care they offer is so wonderful; they get to know the tiniest of things, the things which you can and can't do, and they pass that information on to each other. They're like family. A mad, crazy family, but then that's just like mine. It's home from home!"**

Following this interview, Kate's illness continued to progress rapidly, and sadly she died in July 2014.